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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/46/705)]

46/108. Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 45/139 of 14 December 1990 on emergency humanitarian assistance to Liberian refugees and displaced persons, as well as its resolutions 45/154 on assistance to refugees in Somalia, 45/156 on assistance to voluntary returnees and displaced persons in Chad, 45/157 on humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons in Djibouti, 45/159 on assistance to refugees and displaced persons in Malawi, 45/160 on the situation of refugees in the Sudan, 45/161 on assistance to refugees and returnees in Ethiopia, 45/171 on assistance to student refugees in southern Africa, all of 18 December 1990, and resolution 45/137 on the International Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa of 14 December 1990,

Having considered the reports of the Secretary-General 1/ and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2/

Bearing in mind that the affected countries are least developed countries,

Convinced of the necessity of strengthening the capacity within the United Nations system for the implementation and the overall coordination of relief programmes for refugees, returnees and displaced persons,

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1/ A/46/371, A/46/428, A/46/429, A/46/430, A/46/431, A/46/432, A/46/433, A/46/434 and A/46/471.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 12 (A/46/12).

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Welcoming the prospects for voluntary repatriation and durable solutions across the continent,

Recognizing the need for States of origin to create conditions conducive to voluntary repatriation,

Noting with appreciation the commitment of the countries concerned to do their utmost to facilitate the provision of assistance to the affected populations and to take the necessary measures in this regard,

Realizing the importance of assisting the host countries, in particular those countries that have been hosting refugees for a longer time, to remedy environmental deterioration and the negative impact on public services and the development process,

Recognizing the catalytic role the High Commissioner plays, together with the international community and development agencies, in the promotion of humanitarian aid and development with a view to finding durable and lasting solutions for refugees, returnees and displaced persons,

Deeply concerned about the critical humanitarian situation in countries in the Horn of Africa and other African countries, caused by drought, conflict and population movements,

Welcoming the establishment by the Secretary-General of an office for the Special Emergency Programme for the Horn of Africa and its efforts to coordinate needs assessment and to mobilize resources,

Taking into account the consolidated inter-agency appeal for the Special Emergency Programme for the Horn of Africa,

Bearing in mind the necessity of facilitating the work of humanitarian organizations in the Horn of Africa, in particular in the supply of food, medicine and health care to refugees, returnees and displaced persons,

Deeply concerned by the incessant inflow of externally displaced persons and refugees, which has added considerably to the burden already being carried by Djibouti in respect of refugees in the country, whose combined number now stands at over ninety thousand,

Noting that according to the situation report No. 1 of 1 October 1991 issued by the office for the Special Emergency Programme for the Horn of Africa, in Djibouti the ratio of refugees to nationals is nearing one to four, which poses a considerable burden on the country in terms of security, a drain on economic resources and pressure on social services, given the alarming number of externally displaced persons and refugees and the size of the country and its population,

Bearing in mind that the majority of externally displaced persons and refugees in Djibouti are concentrated in the country's main urban centres and aware of all the implications thereof,

Recognizing the influxes of refugees and voluntary returnees and the presence of displaced persons in Ethiopia,

Deeply concerned about the massive presence of refugees, voluntary returnees and displaced persons in Ethiopia and the enormous burden this has placed on the country's infrastructure and meagre resources,

Deeply concerned also about the grave consequences this situation has entailed for Ethiopia's capability to grapple with the effects of the prolonged drought and rebuild the country's economy,

Aware of the heavy burden placed on the Government of Ethiopia and of the need for immediate and adequate assistance to refugees, voluntary returnees, displaced persons and victims of natural disasters,

Aware also of the burden placed on the Government of Kenya because of the recent influx of refugees from Somalia and Ethiopia,

Recognizing the efforts that have been made by the Government of Kenya with the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and bilateral donors to deal with this emergency situation, and the need for further assistance to over forty-eight thousand refugees still in Kenya,

Deeply concerned about the tragic impact that the civil war in Somalia has had on the lives of its people, affecting four to five million people who are either refugees in neighbouring countries or internally displaced and are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance,

Welcoming the High Commissioner's initial repatriation plan and aware that thousands of Somali refugees who are at present in other neighbouring countries, as well as internally displaced persons who wish to return to their homes of origin, require a planned and integrated international assistance programme designed to cover their basic needs,

Equally concerned about the plight of Ethiopian refugees remaining in Somalia who urgently need international assistance for their voluntary repatriation to their country of origin,

Deeply convinced that it is necessary that humanitarian assistance to Somali refugees, returnees and displaced persons be mobilized urgently and delivered without delay in view of the gravity of the situation,

Noting with appreciation that the Sudan has hosted, over an extended period of time, more than seven hundred and eighty thousand refugees, and that the country received an additional influx of nearly one hundred thousand Ethiopian refugees in May 1991, 3/ notwithstanding the consequent heavy burden shouldered by the people and the Government of the Sudan and in spite of the prevailing economic difficulties of the country,

Recognizing the efforts of the Government of the Sudan, the Government of Ethiopia and the Office of the High Commissioner to organize the voluntary repatriation of the Ethiopian refugees despite the serious financial and logistical problems,

Emphasizing the need to help refugees by implementing the projects for refugee aid and development in refugee-affected areas of the Sudan in accordance with resolution 45/160,

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3/ See A/46/431.

Considering that the difficulties of repatriation and reintegration of returnees and relocation of displaced persons are aggravated by natural disasters and that the process poses serious humanitarian, social and economic problems to the Government of Chad,

Cognizant of the appeal to Member States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to continue to provide the necessary assistance to the Government of Chad to alleviate its problems and improve its abilities to implement the programme of repatriation, reintegration and relocation of voluntary returnees and displaced persons,

Noting with appreciation the continuing mediatory efforts of the Economic Community of West African States to find a peaceful solution to the Liberian crisis and the important decisions reached at the meeting held at Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, on 30 October 1991, which could lead to a final settlement,

Bearing in mind the findings and recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on emergency humanitarian assistance to Liberian refugees and displaced persons, 4/ particularly the need to continue emergency relief operations pending a comprehensive needs-assessment mission to all parts of Liberia, which will result in a unified appeal and a concerted plan of action for the relief and rehabilitation of Liberia,

Recognizing the increasing number of voluntary returnees to Liberia and the enormous burden this has placed on the country's infrastructure and fragile economy,

Concerned that despite the efforts made to provide the necessary material and financial assistance for the Liberian refugees and for the relocation of displaced persons, the situation still remains precarious and has serious implications for the long-term development process of Liberia, as well as for those West African countries hosting Liberian refugees,

Recognizing the heavy burden placed on the people and Government of Malawi and the sacrifices they are making in caring for the refugees, given the country's limited social services and infrastructure, and the need for adequate international assistance to enable them to continue their efforts to provide assistance to the refugees,

Gravely concerned about the continuing serious social and economic impact of the massive presence of these refugees, as well as its far-reaching consequences for the country's long-term development process,

Bearing in mind the findings and recommendations of the inter-agency mission to Malawi, 5/ particularly on the need to strengthen the country's socio-economic infrastructure in order to enable it to provide for the immediate humanitarian relief requirements of the refugees, as well as the long-term national development needs of the country,

Recognizing the need to view refugee-related development projects within local and national development plans,

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4/ A/46/432.

5/ See A/43/536, sect. III.

Convinced that there is an urgent need for the international community to extend maximum and concerted assistance to southern African countries sheltering refugees, returnees and displaced persons and also to highlight the plight of these persons,

Welcoming with appreciation the fact that the High Commissioner has continued in 1990 and 1991 to organize and implement programmes for educational and other appropriate assistance for student refugees in the southern African region,

Expressing its appreciation to the Governments of Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe for the cooperation that they have extended to the High Commissioner on matters concerning the welfare of student refugees,

1. Takes note of the reports of the Secretary-General 1/ and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; 2/

2. Expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner, donor countries and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for their assistance in mitigating the plight of the large number of refugees, returnees and displaced persons;

3. Commends the Governments concerned for providing assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and their efforts to promote voluntary repatriation and other measures taken in order to find appropriate and lasting solutions;

4. Expresses deep concern at the serious and far-reaching consequences of the massive presence of refugees and displaced persons in the countries concerned and the implications for their long-term socio-economic development;

5. Expresses the hope that additional resources will be made available for general refugee programmes to keep pace with refugee needs;

6. Appeals to Member States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to provide adequate material, financial and technical assistance for relief and rehabilitation programmes for the large number of refugees, voluntary returnees and displaced persons and victims of natural disasters;

7. Calls upon the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner to continue their efforts to mobilize humanitarian assistance for the relief, repatriation, rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees, returnees and displaced persons;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to mobilize adequate financial and material assistance for the full implementation of ongoing projects in rural and urban areas affected by the presence of refugees, returnees and displaced persons;

9. Requests the High Commissioner to continue her efforts with the appropriate United Nations agencies and intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to consolidate and increase essential services to refugees, returnees and displaced persons;

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10. Requests the Secretary-General to study and assess the environmental and socio-economic impact of the prolonged presence of refugees in the host countries with a view to rehabilitating those areas;

11. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive and consolidated report on the implementation of the present resolution to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, under the sub-item entitled "Questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons", and an oral report to the Economic and Social Council at its regular session of 1992.

74th plenary meeting
16 December 1991